

EJÉRCITO RECONSTRUCTOR RELIGIOSO
VIVA CRISTO REY.



My Adventures in Mexico

Léon Degrelle

A NOTE FROM THE TRANSLATOR..

When asked by the journalist Claude Bourgeois in 1970 what life meant to him, Léon Degrelle simply responded — "Heroism."

This story is no different.

When he, as a devout Catholic (who was also Jesuit educated - back when that meant something) heard the cry of a people in distress, he picked up what little he had and began his journey. His trip lasting almost 3 entire months, Léon Degrelle went on a 4000 kilometer pilgrimage to all the places held sacred by the local Catholics, infiltrated the homes and parties of the masonic socialists, and gathered tons of evidence to bring back home and report to the broader European public the tragedy of the Mexicans.

Upon discovering this more lesser known work by him, I felt the need to make it available to the broader English-speaking public. Being someone who only knows a few words of Spanish myself, this was hard, but using the miracles of the internet, I was able to contain most of the original meaning of Degrelle's writings.

Enjoy!

"Those who hesitate before effort do so because their soul is asleep. The great ideal always gives strength to tame the body, to endure fatigue, hunger, and cold. What do sleepless nights, overwhelming work, pain, or poverty matter? What is essential is to preserve in the depths of the heart the great force that encourages and drives, that soothes frayed nerves, that makes tired blood flow again, that makes the eyes, heavy with sleep, burn with a devouring and ardent fire. Then, nothing is harsh anymore. Pain has been transformed into joy because, thanks to it, we give ourselves more completely, and our sacrifice is purified."

Léon Degrelle

degrellian

Drawings by Paul Wellens

[Untranslated Spanish version](#)

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INTRODUCTION

by José Luis Jerez Riesco

Léon Degrelle was the founder of a political movement that coined the word "REX," used both for the publications of the Belgian Youth Association—a Catholic action group at the time—and later as the name of the movement itself, even serving as the title of the newspaper that became the voice of this new ideal. "REX" became a familiar term in the political language of the 20th century, and its meaning has been included in dictionaries worldwide, inseparably linked to Degrelle, who, in his work *Firma y Rúbrica*, explains that the word originated from Christus-Rex.

Mexico was the first country to celebrate the Feast of Christ the King when, in 1914, its bishops requested that Rome proclaim the reign of Christ over their dioceses, enthroning Him forever. On Sunday, January 11, the multitude gathered and, as they left religious services, cried out in a powerful and spontaneous demonstration: "*¡Viva Cristo Rey!*" This culminated in the Zócalo square, in front of the cathedral in the Federal Capital. Similarly, in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Monsignor Orozco, in his pastoral work, spread the initiative among the faithful of his diocese with great apostolic zeal.

The only historical precedent for such an unusual and fervent request is found in Savonarola's Florence. It can be said, therefore, that the invocation of Christ's kingship was a Mexican initiative, and the depth of its roots in that land led Pope Pius XI to solemnly establish, in 1925, the Feast of Christ the King, with the meaning and the hope of "Thy Kingdom come."

"*¡Viva Cristo Rey!*" resonated deeply in the Mexican hearts. It was a cry of combat and a declaration of faith. When the Mexican rulers, led by the tyrant Plutarco Elías Calles, became openly hostile toward the Catholic faithful, the federal government unleashed a persecution unprecedented in the history of Christendom. Disparagingly, atheists called those fighting for Christ's cause "Cristos Reyes" or "Cristeros," and by that name, they entered Mexico's history and martyrology.

The invocation of Christ the King became the final phrase, the closing of every prayer. In Guadalajara, during the bloody days and massacres against Christians, after the Rosary and the litanies, a popular prayer

composed by Anacleto González Flores became widespread. It read: "I do not wish to fight, nor to live, nor to die, except for You and for Your Church. Holy Mother of Guadalupe! Accompany this poor sinner in his agony. Grant me that my last cry on earth and my first song in heaven may be: ¡Viva Cristo Rey!"

Léon Degrelle followed closely, from his native Belgium, the bloody events taking place in Mexico, where once again the faith in Christ—the same faith that beat in his own heart—became the merciless accusation that justified the mass extermination of His faithful. It was a new Crusade, in which between twenty-five and thirty thousand Cristeros lost their lives over the three years of the war. The Cristeros died in a constant flow of bloodshed, not in large open-field battles, but in small groups of heroic resistance, day after day.

It was a fierce but unequal fight. The government's actions were marked by the most brutal violence. It was an undeclared war, but one fully executed—a popular war in which the insurgents were driven by unwavering religious conviction, while the federalists were driven by the hatred of their Marxist leaders, who sought to eradicate the religious sentiment deeply rooted in the Cristero people.

For the federal military, any method was acceptable as long as it created institutional terror among the population, which was emboldened and strengthened by its religious faith. They carried out mass executions without trial, hangings that left human bodies swinging until scavenger birds stripped the flesh from the corpses displayed on telegraph poles along the railways, torture, scorched-earth campaigns against farmers, looting, and sacrilege.

The origins of the insurgents could not have been more humble. They rose up against tyranny and oppression driven by a higher calling—without firearms, without ammunition—arming themselves only by disarming the enemies of the faith. They had no uniforms, their only visible symbol at first being a black armband worn as a sign of mourning. Later, they added a red and white cloth tied around the arm as a mark of identification and recognition. They grew from small bands to squadrons, and from squadrons to regiments, recruiting men house by house, spreading the word of the Gospel. These were local units, bound by oath, with only two possible outcomes: victory or death. Fragile groups where concentration and dispersion happened with the same swiftness.

The atmosphere grew increasingly tense and hostile. In 1920,

Obregón was elected president—a staunch enemy of the Catholic Church. The government leaders declared that the only path forward was the one set by Lenin, and the first step in clearing this new political road would be to blow up the archbishop's palace and the cathedral, which they considered a nest of vipers.

By 1925, the situation for Catholics had become critical. On January 2, the teacher Anacleto González Flores issued a manifesto calling the Cristeros to action. Guadalajara stirred. A first Committee for the Defense of Religion was formed, which then became the Unión Popular, based on the ideas of the French priest Bergoend, founder of Catholic Action for the Youth of Mexico—a group that exhorted its members to choose death over denying Christ the King.

Soon, the mobilization was widespread. The ACJM (Catholic Youth) was joined by the Archdiocesan Federation of Labor, the Brotherhood of Nocturnal Adoration, the Union of Catholic Ladies, the Knights of Columbus, the National Catholic Confederation of Labor, and various Marian congregations. At the forefront were Palomar, Vizcarra, González Flores, Iturbide, Alemán, Miramón, Mejía... Lacking knowledge of war and military tactics, they sought out General Orosquieta and entrusted him with coordinating the military strategy.

President Calles, known as "The Bolshevik," was dictatorship incarnate and cruelty made flesh. He had the full support of the Americans, who provided him with weapons of all calibers and funds to crush the Cristeros. Calles was a Freemason, having reached the 33rd degree within the sect. He became the Church's most vicious enemy and, with sinister resolve, set out to annihilate every trace of Catholic spirituality. He expelled priests from Mexican soil, closed Catholic schools and colleges, shut down convents, tore down cloisters, destroyed oratories, suppressed and criminalized worship in churches, and decreed mandatory secularism in education.

Facing this dire situation, on April 21, 1926, the collective pastoral letter was issued, raising its voice to declare: "The moment has come to say non possumus," reaffirmed in the letter of July 25, which called on the faithful to "imitate the steadfastness of the early Christians, who died so that their blood might become the seed of new converts." These ideas were further reinforced in a new pastoral letter on September 12.

The last day of July 1926 marked the final day of public worship in Mexican churches. This was the trigger that ignited the Cristero War—the

so-called Cristiada. Alongside the humble people stood some bishops, such as those from the state of Colima and Jalisco, as well as more than a hundred volunteer priests who refused to abandon their flock in the most intense moments of persecution. They became chaplains to the Cristeros—some even laid down their ministry and took up arms. Two priests rose to the rank of general: Fathers Aristeo Pedrosa and José Reyes Vegas.

The government was assassinating priests in their dioceses and parishes. A total of 90 were gunned down, 59 in the archdiocese of Guadalajara, 35 in Jalisco, 6 in Zacatecas, 18 in Guanajuato, and 7 in Colima.

The Cristeros were soldiers of Christ. After a hard day, with no military experience or training, knowing that the enemy army vastly outnumbered them and that there was no possibility of being taken prisoner—only brutal battle, guerrilla warfare, and hand-to-hand combat, and, if they were unlucky enough to be captured, execution by firing squad or hanging. At night, they prayed and sang pious songs, hymns of their pure and ancient faith.

This scene of glory and martyrdom, of sacrifice and heroism, of dedication, renunciation, and altruism, fascinated Léon Degrelle, who, from his earliest adolescence, had been the leader of an epic generation. Degrelle found in Mexico, among that fighting and reckless multitude, the precursor of what would become the idealistic youth of Europe in the 1930s. He wrote in 1929: “The Mexican tragedy has ripped apart my heart like a steel saw.”

He reflected on the 12,000 Catholics in Mexico who had died under atrocious circumstances, tortured, burned alive, or hanged in a revolutionary, anti-clerical savagery. He wanted to align himself with and take up the defense of that people in the Cristiada, a people persecuted and relentlessly attacked. One day, he made an irreversible decision. He could no longer listen from afar. He had heard enough, and had enough reasons and evidence to act. He set off. He had decided to go to Mexico to offer moral and human support to the Cristeros. He consulted his idea with Abbot Wallez, who attentively listened to the risks of the adventure. Being an enthusiastic man, after hearing Léon’s story, he raised his arms to the sky and shouted: “Well, go ahead!” It was like a sign of approval for the solitary expedition.

The first difficulty he faced was obtaining a visa from the Mexican

authorities. Degrelle had become known for his honest and forceful articles on the situation in Mexico. To think they would let him into the country was an impossible fantasy. He had to resort to getting false documentation. In his new passport, with his newly forged identity, his profession was listed as doctor. With this camouflage, he was able to board a ship on St. Nazarius' Day in 1929, a vessel with a large central chimney spewing thick, black smoke, and traveling from Hamburg to Veracruz.

His outfit was light and agile. He wore baggy pants and knee-high socks. His appearance and adventures would later inspire Hergé to create his famous character "Tintin," who was none other than Léon Degrelle, popularized in the comic world, though readers didn't yet realize it, even as Hergé used his imagination freely. The name "Tintin" was a product of Hergé's imagination, but the character was the thread of my adventure, as Degrelle later revealed. In 1975, Hergé stated in an interview with *La Libre Belgique*: "I discovered comic strips thanks to Léon Degrelle. He went as a journalist to Mexico. From there, he sent reports and local newspapers that reflected the atmosphere. That's how I discovered the first comic strip."

When Léon Degrelle climbed the ship's stairs, a sudden thought overcame him, bringing a wave of melancholy: "I'm leaving without knowing if I'll return." He was setting off to the unknown, to a new continent, armed, in crisis, uncertain. He suddenly found the answer: "Be defeated? No, you're going to serve your cause. Even if you die there by chance, could you dream of a nobler cause for which to offer your life?" Degrelle was 23 years old at the time.

The ship moved slowly, crossing the English Channel, leaving the shore, and heading into the Atlantic Ocean, through a storm that created heavy swells with waves as high as six meters. The ship rocked in the tempest. It was impossible to go up to the deck. Six days of turmoil followed, with fierce winds and choppy seas. Then, suddenly, the storm calmed, and good weather took over. Banks of fog alternated with beams of sunlight. One day, in the distance along the horizon, he saw the Azores, which soon vanished from view as the ship sailed on.

The first stop was Havana, Cuba, where the ship docked for 24 hours. Degrelle took the opportunity to disembark and quickly explore the stately, Caribbean city with its old Spanish charm. According to his account, he fell in love with the island.

Two days later, he arrived at Veracruz, the port of entry to Mexico. The journey had lasted 23 days since he left the Hamburg docks. As the ship approached the quay, he felt a restrained emotion at arriving in the country where twelve thousand of his people had fallen as martyrs or heroes, for the cause of Christ for which he lived. It was to them that he was heading, fully aware of the risks he faced.

For Léon, this moment marked the beginning of his true life, the real existence, the genuine passion to live for a noble cause—not just in theory, but in practice, living it firsthand, not in cafés or city gossip circles.

When the ship docked at night, he was armed with false documentation. He had no local money, pesos, nor anyone to help him in that vast, unknown land. His only hope was the telegram he had sent from a high office to a Mexican correspondent with whom he had exchanged some letters. The message to the recipient, who was unaware of his arrival, read: “Belgian friend is on the way.” No one was waiting for him, no one to welcome him, no one to help him with the initial steps in that vast land.

He joined a long line of passengers waiting to go through customs, a line that stretched out from four ships that had arrived simultaneously in the night. There were over a thousand passengers disembarking at the same time. The police stamped the passports and permits hastily, given the overwhelming number of people, which allowed him to pass unnoticed among the crowd.

His first steps led him to a modest hotel near the port, where he registered under the name “Danton.” Leaving his light luggage in the small room, he went out for a walk around the area. That’s when the first miracle and a fortunate coincidence happened. A young man approached him and quietly asked, “Are you Léon Degrelle?” He replied affirmatively, and the young man showed him the pin of the Mexican Catholic youth on the back of his lapel. He was carrying a photograph of Léon Degrelle, which had been clipped from the 61-page booklet titled *Les Taudis* (The Slums). It was a providential encounter. The telegram had been received, and the young man had been searching for him for hours, recognizing him by the insignia and the photo.

The next day, they set off by train on a long journey to Mexico City. The train, crossing plains and mountains, took more than fifteen hours, always heading west. Upon arrival at the station, a group of Cristeros, mingling with the crowd, awaited him. After exchanging tight, emotional hugs, they

drove him to the place that would be his refuge for the first week of his stay.

That Christmas, he spent time with the Mexicans. During those memorable days, he witnessed unusual scenes, like a priest who had to say Mass in a garage, hearing confessions in a chair placed in the corner of the refuge, changing behind parked vehicles, and consecrating the sacred host with barely a whisper. When the service ended, he would change clothes. Degrelle witnessed this "catacomb" environment, where holy water was carried in the ink cartridge of a fountain pen.

Those unforgettable Christmas festivities were spent in the state of Jalisco, which borders the west with the sands, palm trees, and the horizon of the Pacific Ocean, near the city of Guadalajara. He ventured into the mountains and visited some Huichol Indian tribes, with their white thread garments and multicolored embroideries, among which vermillion stood out, woven with geometric cross-stitch patterns, listening to the elders recounting their memories of the long journey of the ancestral deer and the meaning of the Nierika, those round limestone stones, pierced with a hollow circle at the center through which God sees man, and man sees God. He had just left those areas when, a quarter of an hour later, six Catholics were killed in an ambush by the federais.

He attended the "Posadas de la Navidad" celebrations, those innocent religious representations performed by the humble, a kind of sacramental plays to praise the Nativity, usually ending with the euphoria and joy of piñatas.

To everyone, he was Dr. Machin. That was his adopted name and the identity he used during his journey.

There is one statement that is all but a verdict. Degrelle writes: "I wouldn't have minded dying here, with 25 bullets in my body and shouting like the twelve thousand martyrs '¡Viva Cristo Rey!'" Such was the impact of the sensations he experienced in those lands that he entertained the altruistic and generous thought of dying in Mexico for the Cristero cause, which he considered the epic of a martyr people, and he described its men as mystical and rugged knights, Christians.

While thirty thousand young peasants and artisans were wielding rifles generously, and their mothers, wives, and fiancées were mistreated, condemned to forced labor, or deported, the communists engaged in pillaging and looting, committing crimes, sacrileges, and grotesque orgies. The governmental leaders who rose to power without fortune amassed

scandalous riches, such as Minister Maronos, who owned a castle in Talpa, paintings, and artworks requisitioned from everywhere, or like the very estate of President Calles, "the Bolshevik," located between Mexico City and Puebla, one of the richest properties in the country, where he hoarded jewels like rubble, collected luxury cars, and requisitioned anything he could, all while sarcastically waving the flag of a supposed communist and atheistic revolution.

Léon Degrelle journeyed across all the fronts where the Cristeros fought. He traveled more than four thousand kilometers, carrying in his mind the profound effects of emotion and steadfast faith. He shared their campaign meals, which they prepared with products offered by the peasants or the provisions that Catholic women risked passing to them. He slept under the open sky. Upon awakening, after the dawn prayer, he would walk, and when passing near villages where the highest point was the bell tower, he would proudly see flags waving with the inscription "Cristo Rey."

From time to time, he stumbled upon mounds of soft earth. These were the graves of the Cristeros, tombs marked by a simple wooden cross and a repeated, unique inscription: "Died for Cristo Rey." These were the bodies of the fallen, immolated out of love for God.

He had the opportunity to visit the cell where León Toral wrote his last letters and the wall where he was executed for killing the tyrant Obregón, the one who ordered the massacres and the extermination of the Christians. Degrelle confesses that he cried in that place. He also visited the walls of the Guadalajara cemetery, where the martyrs were sacrificed. There, women, devoutly, would come with delicate white handkerchiefs to collect the blood, preserving it as a relic, shed by those giants of Christendom.

On January 1, 1930, Léon Degrelle was in Chápala, the vast inland lake located fifty kilometers from Guadalajara. Here, the Cristeros had entrenched themselves on a small island that rises in the midst of the still, fresh waters, where the rays of the Aztec sun slide every morning and evening.

On the ground, he experienced the keys to the conflict. He understood the meaning of the struggle. He vibrated in unison with the Cristeros. He comforted the parents of the martyrs, who cried in pain and joy simultaneously. He rallied the fighters. He felt, in his innermost being, the agony of Catholicism and its strangulation by Marxist leaders who, in

their crude cruelty, had not foreseen the energy of the Gospel.

He also closely observed the Marxist revolutionaries and could study firsthand their social and agrarian failure. He visited schools with profaned crucifixes, toured prisons and jails to analyze the penitentiary system, attended orgies and rallies held by the new tyrants of the revolutionary situation.

So intense was his activity that he collected papers and documents that, in raw form, weighed 72 kilograms. This was the material he would bring to Belgium as clear evidence of what had happened, which he had personally witnessed and was still occurring in Mexico.

Three months had passed since Léon left his country, where he had left a worried and concerned mother. The time had come for his return. The farewell took place on a Sunday. The Cristeros held a mass assembly, both multitudinous and clandestine. Hugs. Sobbing. Tears in their eyes. Degrelle felt proud to have mixed his enthusiasm, ardor, and youth with that blood and that flint-like faith. He left first by train, and later took a bus. He passed through Querétaro, the city where, in 1867, Emperor Maximilian was shot to death by order of Juárez at the Peak of the Bells. The land, as he moved farther away, became more desert-like. The bus, through a dusty trail, advanced toward the north. There, in those ravines, dry and cracked by thirst, in that immense desert, many Cristeros lost their lives, their eyes fixed on the sky, their arms outstretched in a cross. These were the reflections and thoughts of Léon Degrelle when the bus stopped at an extended stop in the town of Torreón, in the heart of the merciless desert. After crossing the Rio Grande, he would arrive in the United States. Behind him, a unique adventure and experience remained—one that began when he decided to join the Cristeros, show them his solidarity and encouragement, and that made him long for a death like theirs, exemplary, in those lands of cacti and maguey.

To Marie-Paule

"Léon Degrelle is one of those temperaments that one feels from the first contact as the product of his century. When I say his century, I exaggerate. There are spirits marked by the seal of a fraction of a century, of a decade, or even of a year, but it can be assured that Léon Degrelle is pure coinage of 1930.

Some teachings from school remind us that there once existed a so-called "Generation of 1830", who spent their time harmonizing songs around the tree of liberty. A hundred years later, the last grandchildren of those who composed it have not set out to sing about the beautiful liberty, but to use everything good to seize the world. This new generation is infinitely more practical, yet still retains an epic quality. It connects with the airplane, cinema, radio—those prodigious creations that place the universe in our hands, not as imagined by the romantics who were forced to resign themselves, but in vivid and burning reality. This generation reveals the youth of these superb instruments of conquest. They are, in short, of the same age. They progress together and walk hand in hand toward their maturity. With these men, with these innovations, here we see the intoxication of a vague idea giving way to the feverish, impatient, and arrogant enthusiasm of a grand dominion.

Among us, Léon Degrelle is the one who most clearly embodies such a date and similar character. He has shown this in many ways, but the truly typical trait of a youth attuned to his time has been a concrete expedition to Mexico. There, in Mexico, one finds completely—I tell you, Léon Degrelle—the youth of 1930 and also the rhythm of the new world. Enormous projects and means of fortune, sudden enthusiasms and formidable indignations, terrifying decisions and boldness at the height of the circumstances. Everything seems excessive in this adventure and, above all, the very idea of an investigation through traps, a challenging task for someone not of the trade and unfamiliar with the country. And yet, it was carried out. The plan was executed, but not as it would have developed in another time. This inquiry is not about the invention of turbine ships or transcontinental express trains; it is of a very different nature. We are no longer in the era of speed but under the sign of vertigo. It is not the cinematic style, not even the rocket-like notes, or descriptions through little strokes of urgency, that remind us of the time in which we live and the hurricane that pushes us forward.

A similar way of seeing things is not only interesting. One stops scrutinizing with a curious gaze and begins to feel the heartbeat when, beneath this armor of the soul, a generous idea is perceived, when this boldness and these outbursts are truly put to the service of a great cause. It was not only for the pleasure of flying over the world that one day Léon Degrelle set out on his journey. He felt he had something better to do than to mock customs and police for fun. A people was groaning, crying from the depths of its soul, and it was upon hearing this heartbreakin lament that one of our youth went there."

GIOVANNI HOYOIS,

General President of the Belgian Catholic Action Youth (A.C.J.B.)

LEAVING EUROPE

It has been a long time since the Mexican tragedy has torn at my heart like a steel saw. Twelve thousand Catholics have fallen there, under atrocious circumstances—tortured, burned, hanged... One hears, across the seas, distant lamentations. What exactly is happening? When will it be possible, with clear arguments and precise details, to take up the defense of this people freed from revolutionary and anticlerical barbarism? No one moves. I have already waited too long. Fine, I will go there.

Eight days later, I managed to arrange with two newspapers, one from Brussels and the other from Rome, to pay me the "advance" since I didn't have a single penny. That would be figured out later: let's go, anyway. But the situation was that I had written vitriolic articles against the Mexican government. It was, therefore, useless to try to obtain the visa through normal channels. Let's change the setting. Quickly, I get false documentation. Now I am a young doctor. And in the blink of an eye, it's as if I have aged four years: these are jokes that shouldn't be repeated too often!

"Then, my old friend, you're leaving... for San Nazario. Next Thursday. But after your visit, under your false name, to the Mexican Embassy, where you had barely survived the ambushes in a show-off manner, a good bearded man followed you everywhere like your shadow. He's nice, but embarrassing. Be careful if you don't want to end your trip too soon..."

I have decided to go all the way. A ship leaves Hamburg for Veracruz at dusk. I send a telegram. Then I board a plane that takes me in one leap across a third of Europe.

I carefully observe the landscape, so as not to think too much about those in my homeland who are anguished by my madness. I stay firm. My gaze hovers over the nearby rows of long hollow chimney poles, or farms, where chickens and pigs scatter in all directions under the noise of my trimotor... Villages pass by, their hundreds of bright spots of gazes directed toward the sky, through which we glide. My God, what monotony—these houses, these forests, these endless bogs... Here are the long gleams of a river, Hamburg. The plane enters the clouds to fly over the city. Then, suddenly, the spiral descent begins.

I jump into a car. We race along the docks. The ship whistles and yells. I

jump aboard. The gangway folds back toward us. Some spotlights splash the crowd gathered in front of the moving ship at dusk. The shouts abruptly stop and an emotional song rises. A young woman waves a handkerchief at the end of a piece of wood. Tears are shed. Gestures are made. And on the ship's bow, gritting my teeth to keep from being overcome with emotion, I think about the adventure I'm embarking on, not knowing exactly how I will return...

Some rowers on the boats shout in our wake to accompany us for as long as possible... The riverbanks already recede. There are lights everywhere. And along the entire ship, the eyes of some who despair cling to the last traces of the dark land... No more is said. Surely, the ship carries with it, in pain and silence, many dramas... I dream, I see my home again... my mother crying... Memories now overwhelm me, heavy and languid like the twilight... I shake myself. I walk. I pull my travel cap down over my eyebrows to endure the wind that brings us the rough greeting of the nearby sea...

What? Are you letting yourself be beaten down? You are going to serve your people. And even if by chance you should leave your skin there, could you, perhaps, dream of any nobler gift in your life?

Night falls... Everything dissolves into darkness. The ship sets its course toward the North Sea. No more is heard, although in the distance, the howling of the dogs on the shore—the last, invisible, and sorrowful farewell of abandoned Europe....



THE ENGLISH CHANNEL, THE ATLANTIC

I haven't slept. Not because emotion has cut my sleep short. Danger, like pleasure, leaves my engine untouched. I haven't slept simply because I am lodged in the bottom of the hold, in what could be called the cheapest part of the ship: a space three meters by two and a half meters, where six emigrants are crammed together. I am part of this human cargo.

We have, as our beds, rough blankets thrown over narrow planks. Above my nose, a Dane is performing a marvelous gymnastics routine to undress without us being able to capture the wonders of his hairy anatomy. Where does this poor puritanical devil come from? We are going to spend twenty-three days together, during which he will not open his mouth to say a single word in any language of the planet.

The machines create a tremendous racket to my left. The pistons are pounding into my temples with regular gasps. I turn. I turn again. When will I be able to sleep...? A Cuban snores. An American has just lit a cigarette. And always these infernal pistons... This is unbearable. I grab the water jug and fill the basin, which will be, for almost a month, our communal washbasin.

The day breaks, light, with sweet snowy tips on the crests of the waves. Winged ships dance across the sea. Everywhere, white and tanned sails... Dear and tender waters of the North... My eyes scan the horizon. I imagine the soft mist... Le Zoute, Le Coq, Ostend. It must be somewhere over there. Why, then, does a country that is being abandoned suddenly awaken in a body...? At the end of the invisible pier, my eyes catch sight of an elongated silhouette, a large, clear, and sad continent, with eyes as green as the seaweed...

It's over. The night falls. Far away, ahead, the lights of my homeland are blinking, no doubt, in the darkness blowing... All my youth is carried away on the wild waves that advance in tumultuous tide toward my country...

The bell tolls in the heavy fog. Someone has just shaken me. A man leans toward me, the "waiter," who took me for a Frenchman. This German woke me up to tell me in an excited voice: "Sir, you can see your homeland..."

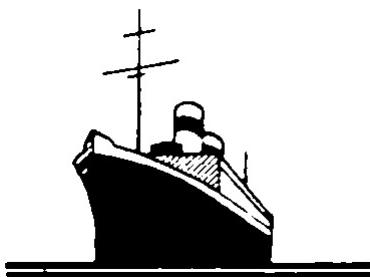
I love France, but I would like to sleep. So, I can do nothing but get up: this young man wanted to give me some joy. I go up to the bridge. In the distance, I can see rows of lights marking, in the closed night, like

markers, the French soil... "Sir, you can see your homeland..."

But no. My country has already vanished into the darkness. Yet, this word, homeland, shakes strange echoes within me that make me feel unwell...

A new day, still, to cross La Mancha. Seagulls cut their soft whiteness through the air. From the cliffs, half the passengers breathe the air of William the Conqueror. We reach the Isle of Wight. The British Navy passes with its battleships, the voices of sailors' chants and phonographs can be heard... The lighthouses, with their stylized shadows, and the gaunt seaplanes keep watch. Southampton. We board an army of priests and nuns. The siren howls one last time.

The ship sways. The night. The rain falls in blows on the bridges... No one... I dream, with my gaze lost, at the top of the gangway... The waves grow cresting... The storm that dies in my heart and is born on the tide... We have entered the Atlantic.



IN THE STORM

The chores have gone awry. The ship is not moving. Yesterday, we could still see some pinkish cliffs. Today, the Ocean makes us dance and tries to trap our steps...

Most of the passengers have tried to climb up to the decks. They've paid for it, naturally: they want to enjoy the show! The most beautiful spectacle is, indisputably... their figure. They are yellow or green. They have hiccups, they seal their lips. A little boy has started vomiting against the wind and is naturally blessing the entire neighborhood: it's the sign of defeat!

The ship, conscious of its victory, begins to snort. Walls of water slam against the galleries. Above, tirelessly, the bell rings in the fog. The retreat is completed on the second day. We are seated at a table, a dozen diners, to diligently finish off the apricot fruit baskets and devour the Frankfurt sausages. The others couldn't bear it. They stay grumbling on their mattresses, asking the "waiter" to feed all the sharks of the ocean... There's only one woman standing, a young Polish Jewish woman with fierce, large eyes, who laughs alone, mockingly, in the gale.

The ship isn't moving, so to speak. Not a sail. Not a whistle of a siren. Not a light, the night. There's no way to hold on to the table. My neighbor, an eighteen-year-old Englishman who wants to become a "cowboy," asks the waiter every ten minutes for a lemonade, which the rolling ship spills mathematically; this cannot last any longer; one more violent jolt: my Englishman flies over his chair and, like a barrel, rolls to the door of a cabin, crashing into it with a tremendous noise!

The night triumphs. One suddenly collapses, feet in the air, giving the impression of having made a full circle. Then, the circuit starts again in the opposite direction, amid a hellish swaying of basins, toothbrushes, suitcases, shoes, sock garters, and lifebuoys.

It's not the right moment to shave: one would split the face in two. We have prophetic and buccaneer beards, with six-day-old hair. What can be done? Since the passengers, almost in their entirety, are agonizing, above all of them roll the basins, buckets, and tubs from the ship!

The only distraction is to climb to the highest point of the ship: there, at sunset, holding onto a mast to avoid a plunge, I shout, singing to the wind and the sea spray, with nostalgic airs of the land, of home... The storm penetrates my body with its harsh clamor of battle... Exaltation.

Magnificence...

But little by little, after six days, the hurricane calms down. The porthole, this morning, looks at us with a clear window. I rise from my cot. I see the sea festooned, with pale gray crests: the Azores Islands...

And to mark the new time, the gleams of a sunlit roof whiten the distant coast.



ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE ANTILLES

The sun spills over the incredibly calm waves, and everything seems to change... We glide between the islands with flower-like names... Some seagulls flutter about with their mournful cries... The rooftops approach, bright and warm... Slowly, some languid women reappear on the decks, facing the sun and offering their smiles to the Azores... We are saved... Now comes the great swoon with the harshness of the sun. Some lie down in the hammocks or even on the deck boards. A light breeze caresses the dresses... In the distance, everything is blue, everything is unified; some vines and creepers pass, bringing the tight, green-and-yellow greeting from the depths of the Caribbean gulfs... One bows in reverence, moved by the sweetness of the air, the color of the water, and the warm breeze that bronzes the surroundings...

I make an acquaintance. A German has just spoken to me in French. I forget that he has a sick eye, resembling frog eggs... He speaks in French—ah! Finally... I utter a few words that resonate in the wind. I find them like the flavors of ripe fruits, and I like this German who allows me to say them. His name is "Mossieu Jacobi." He was an interpreter during the war and served his country by secretly exchanging "Reich" flour for butter and eggs from the farmers. He speaks with adoration of his wife. I kindly ask if he has a picture of her. He's very happy and shows me, enchanted, a cardboard photograph on which a phenomenal matron, in a swimsuit, emulates Venus beneath a cherry tree in bloom! Bravo, Jacobi! His greatest pleasure is taking photographs. He has me stand before him. He calculates the distance for a quarter of an hour, crouches down, starts the shutter, and then realizes, when it's all done, that he forgot to open the lens or change the film!

We are in shirt sleeves. The heat is suffocating. People sleep. Or they talk with a neighbor, faint under the sun... Or one goes swimming. Yes, swimming... to the bow of the ship, under the open sky. There, a large fabric container is installed, continually filled with seawater. You can dive in there. You can even soak your body with a water pump. One can laugh hysterically at Mossieu Jacobi's wild hair! After cooling off, you can stretch your body in full sun, motionless and roasted. The orchestra's guitars revive the nerves. But one stays still. In the midday drowsiness, only the thick, slimy dolphins and flying fish still jump near the ship...

In the evening, the whole deck lights up. Dinner is served in evening wear or costumes. The sky is magical, a great red disk forms an aura around the moon, millions of stars sparkle in the sky, and the ship strides forward in the phosphorescent sea... People dance, mad with joy, in the wonderful night, intoxicated by the heartbreaking calls of the saxophones.

The hours slip away like melodies... There is nothing but music and the enchantment of tropical nights... One stretches their body towards the sparkling tide. They stand awestruck on the deck, face turned towards the stars. Dreams of other worlds, fiery and overwhelming... The intoxication of warm nights along the silver route of the Antilles.

HAVANA

It had been nearly three weeks since we set sail from Hamburg, leaving behind its fog, its choucroute, and the blinding lighthouses that illuminated the moment of our departure.

The sunsets moved us more and more each day, until they made us shout in admiration or dream for hours, as the harmonious swirls of mist—purple, pink, blue, pale green—blended together before fading away in the sunsets... We stood at the bow of the ship, lost in thought, fists resting against our chins, savoring that riot of color, only to suddenly feel the night fall, its fever mixing with the deep voices of the sailors singing in chorus under the stars.

We were nearing America. There was still dancing, but with the languid gazes of those who had no desire to see the ports where adventure would soon disembark.

One morning, Mossieu Jacobi, camera slung over his shoulder, climbed as high as he could, his nose nearly resting on his knees... Suddenly, a frothy line scalloped the horizon... An hour later, gentle cliffs appeared, rocks gnawed by white waves... The Bahamas—the very islands where Christopher Columbus once landed... America... America... I'm not mistaken. It's there. I'm about to arrive... about to set foot on its land. I'm already breathing its air deep into my lungs. I'm mad with joy. America!

The ship moved slowly. Still, one last sunset. I left the ship's hold. I went out under the moonlight, swimming in my pajamas. Everything swept me away: the water embracing my body, the fleeting lights in the sky, the sailors sleeping across the deck... There was a silvery silence where muffled voices could be heard. Sleep? That would be absurd. There I was, standing on deck, in my golf clothes, my heart taut like a bowstring. It was five in the morning. A long line of tiny lights traced the coastline. The horizon drew us in like a lover. The old Spanish fort of Havana appeared in the dawn, its golden light caressing the stone blocks. Then, everything lit up. The palm trees fanned themselves... Day broke over the bay in great bursts of light... Small boats paraded in a straight line, carrying two rows of half-naked Black men—but wearing straw hats!

A flotilla surrounded us. I jumped into a boat where a large, glistening devil gestured wildly. And there I was—on Cuban soil.

It felt like being in Seville. Wide arcades lined the sidewalks; the shops were vast open spaces. You could sit right in the middle of the street, in

grand armchairs, and be shaved by mulattos or distinguished Iberian gentlemen—true masters at skinning rabbits. Half-shaved, I slipped away from these reapers and wandered the city. There were Black people everywhere, mestizos, or whites in shirt sleeves. This mix was both amusing and terrible: the Black women were wretched, their faces ruddy and haggard, and in every way bloated beneath their gaudy, multicolored fabrics.

Yet the city was charming, with its towering palm trees, its rose gardens, and its marble benches along the promenade... In the main square, huge loudspeakers caressed the ears... Why? Fascinating: it was all so people could hear... Cuban parliamentarians debating in the Capitol! To cope with the heat, they had installed speakers in the streets, so the debates could be followed barefoot, beside a fountain, in the shade of the palm trees...

I left the old Cathedral. And there I was, racing at eighty kilometers an hour along the beautifully paved malecón, skimming for miles past golden and green seas. We reached the countryside—giant palms, banana trees, enormous flowers. Every fifty meters, a charming Moorish villa appeared among the rose bushes. In paradise, I'd ask God the Father to let me choose my home in a place like this.

I made it back to the port just in time for departure. My arms were full of brilliant bouquets of flowers and golden grapefruits... The light, these incredible colors, had left me drunk with wonder... The ship sailed slowly along the island... You could see mountains, fires burning in the forests, great rocky cliffs...

Night fell—our twentieth night—sweet and sorrowful... I would never, ever have left the Antilles.

Under the Nose of the Police

Two more nights, and we would reach Mexico. The time for dreaming, for sunbathing, or for dancing under the moonlight was over. Tirelessly, the ship crossed the Caribbean Gulf. The hours slipped by, one after another. Ahead—tomorrow—we would catch sight of the Mexican coast, with its coconut palms and its squads of soldiers, the land where twelve thousand of my own had fallen, martyrs or heroes, for the cause of Christ, the very cause I live for. It is to them that I speak now, fully aware of the risk I'm about to take.

And deep down, I feel better, more at ease thinking of this than dancing tangos. I was softening. Time to pull myself together. Now, real life is about to begin.

We would arrive at night. I'd have to risk everything, with not a second for hesitation. My papers were fake—riddled with contradictions and outright absurdities. I didn't have, by any means, the amount of money required to buy the right to set foot on land. And I didn't know a single soul in this country.

— How's that possible?

— That's how it was. I didn't know a soul. Back in Europe, someone had simply shown me a postcard from Mexico that read: "When will L.D. come?" L.D. was me. I packed my bag. And tomorrow, I'll try to disembark.

From the ship, I had sent a telegram to the sender of that postcard: "The Belgian friend... will arrive." Nothing more. Would they understand? All I could do now was wait and stay sharp.

No need to get nervous. I still had no clear idea how I was going to pull this off.

I'd figure it out at the last minute.

While I waited, one hand in my pocket, I prayed the rosary.

The ship docked opposite Veracruz before dawn. Some drums echoed ominously. What happened next? I can't say—doing so would compromise those who helped me, who were seen. One way or another, by morning, right under the nose of the police, I made it ashore—with authentic stamps on my forged documents. I slipped away among the thousands of passengers disembarking that same day from four different ships.

But I still had to get to Mexico City, and with my last dollars, find the

Catholic leaders there. Fine: I'd take the first train at sunrise. I checked into the most modest hotel at the port. They asked for my name. I thought of the phrase: "Audacity, more audacity, and always audacity." I wrote in the register: Danton.

I wandered through the city humming to myself. Hideous birds—like crows seen through a magnifying glass—perched on the ruins of buildings torched by the Revolution, or on the piles of garbage abandoned along the sidewalks. It was quite a sight.

The Indians, draped in their multicolored ponchos, looked like weekend pharaohs; the Indian women trotted through the dust, burdened like little pack mules.

It was a festival day at the church. A colorful crowd gathered under garlands: laborers in coveralls, their arms crossed; children dressed in traditional costumes, carrying fruit, flowers, or pots on their backs; women with enormous eyes veiled under lace. The boys beat their chests with heavy blows, as if confessing to grave sins. The music of the organs mingled with the crash of drums and blaring trumpets, while under the porch, a poor beggar woman nursed her baby, whose jet-black eyes shone brightly and sweetly.

I ate rice with tomato and tortillas—a kind of corn flatbread. Then I set off. Suddenly, a young man grabbed my shoulder. A cop? One second more and I'd have punched him.

But he quickly showed me the inside of his jacket lapel, where he had hidden the insignia of Mexican Catholic youth. He whispered, "Are you Léon Degrelle?"

In Mexico, the Catholic leaders had understood the cable I'd sent: "Belgian friend." A tiny photo on a flyer for my book *Les Taudis* was the only reference they had. They had sent this guide to Veracruz, and somehow—among a thousand travelers—he had recognized me on the street!

Everything was ready down there for my welcome and protection, so I could carry out my mission to the very end.

I had won the first round.



ARRIVAL IN MÉXICO

All that remained now was to reach Mexico City. A small, local train—about as rustic as they come—would carry us up to the plateau, climbing in fifteen hours to an altitude of 2,500 meters.

It was quite the expedition. Under normal circumstances, a comfortable pullman bus, moving at a good pace, would have taken us up into the highlands, where we could have enjoyed toast, apricots, and pineapples while admiring the scenery from the heart of our little circles. But since the road was gravel, we had to settle for this old rail line, practically dating back to the time of the Aztecs.

The rickety carriage made the journey once every twenty-four hours, greeted by the excitement of the local villagers. At five in the morning, after incredible effort, I managed to squeeze myself into a tiny corner, perched on what looked like a janitor's desk. For an hour and a half, travelers poured in, crowding the platform, staring at us with wide eyes, clutching their suitcases, waiting in vain for the miraculous appearance of more vehicles—as once there had been the miracle of the loaves! Sadly for them, no miracle came.

At daybreak, with great clatter and under the watchful eyes of soldiers stationed, rifles in hand, on the first wagon, the train began its journey.

Immediately, you felt at home among the ragged Indians, their broad brimmed hats giving them a musketeer's air; the women in orange or green petticoats, their black-blue hair streaming across their neighbors' faces. I was thrilled and quickly struck up camaraderie with everyone in the carriage, twisting and turning just to make space. They offered me tortillas. Being polite, I accepted.

By the second one, my mouth was on fire from the chili peppers, and I began howling like a wild beast on the hunt, as if I had swallowed ten thousand ants on an empty stomach! To soothe the burning, I devoured oranges, mandarins, grapefruits, coconuts—every piece of fruit in the basket—swearing to the gods above I would never again touch those monstrous things!

The landscape made up for it all. We traveled through the tropical region, not far from the coast, surrounded by palm groves, sugarcane fields, orange orchards bursting with glowing fruit, and vast stretches of

untamed land tangled with wild vegetation.

From time to time, we'd pass by huts. The train would stop so the engineer could greet his farmer cousin or the wet nurse of his barber's sister-in-law. Meanwhile, the locals swarmed out with baskets to gather every kind of fruit, and magnificent scentless roses growing from the hollow trunks of banana trees. The whole village jumped and shrieked, children with chocolate-colored skin ran around, and unbelievable pigs—half pink, half black, or entirely gray or brown—rooted through the dust: a mixed breed, like the Mexicans themselves!

We left behind the livestock and the people and began the ascent into the mountains. The train snaked endlessly, twisting and turning, until suddenly vast landscapes opened before us—green ravines, dark green valleys, all shimmering beneath a light so dazzling, so vibrant, it was like nothing I had ever seen.

Then came the sandy valleys, playing tricks on the eyes. It looked like snow everywhere, so much so that after two hours, we felt as though we were skirting colossal glaciers—glaciers whose arms ended in snow-covered volcanoes with fantastic shapes. One of them seemed to lift a reclining giant into the sky.

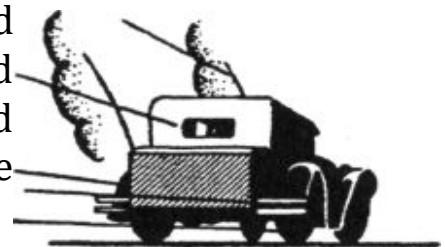
Baudelaire would have adored this snow goddess, her chest lost among the clouds, her head thrown back, as if the hand of the world itself held tight to her frozen hair.

Along the tracks, we sometimes glimpsed haciendas—fortified squares surrounded by sugarcane and maguey fields, those towering two-meter plants that produce pulque, the local moonshine.

After four hours, we passed through arid regions, cracked by countless dry riverbeds sunk between sheer cliffs.

Then came the multicolored sunset, a frenzy of greens and oranges cascading down from the glaciers... We had reached the plateau. Pale green ponds slumbered under the clear moonlight... and in the distance, the lights of Mexico City.

Some Cristeros—soldiers of Christ—blended in with the crowd, awaiting my arrival. They placed me, under good protection, in a car that whisked me away to the safe house where I would take refuge for the first few weeks of my mad mission.



CHRISTMAS WITH THE MEXICANS

I was settled in a village with no paved streets, completely covered in roses, with streams of water gushing from fountains tiled in multicolored ceramics... The servants were trustworthy Indians, tough as rubber, dressed in thick dark blue cloth. On Sundays, a priest would come to celebrate Mass in the garage. He'd sit on a chair in the garden and hear confessions, with people lined up in single file, kneeling on the grass. Then he would stand beside a truck, and surrounded by poor, ragged folks and women dressed in black, he would consecrate the Holy Host. It was moving enough to bring one to tears. Communion took place between two tar barrels.

At the end, the priest—now in civilian clothes—would offer us his fountain pen, which had been emptied of ink and filled instead with holy water.

But if I had stayed there, merely admiring the roses, eating dulces and peanuts, and playing with the troop of children belonging to Conchita and Guadalupe, who lived in the house, my investigation wouldn't have moved forward at all. I needed to go out, study the Mexican people up close, immerse myself in their lives, and especially get into the official circles.

Each morning, I went out hunting, flanked by my personal guards, and didn't return until nightfall—not without first speeding past the villa to check if the police were waiting to arrest me along with my bowl of rice soup! Oh, holy police! I never took off my jacket at night without imagining the surprise of being woken suddenly by soldiers smashing through the window—just as had happened to many Catholics. And yet, that didn't stop me from snoring like a country locomotive or a senator in the afternoon session. Honestly, I would've greeted them in my pajamas, with great humor.

Sometimes, I almost regret not ending up in jail—what a fine scene it would've been, falling there riddled with twenty bullets, shouting like the twelve thousand martyrs: "Viva Cristo Rey!"

But it seems the good Lord didn't want a loud, boastful daredevil like me—not that it was necessary anyway.

Truthfully, I wasn't very lucky: on the last day of December 1929, by the Pacific Ocean, a few kilometers from Guadalajara, I made a peaceful stop at an Indian village. They had just lost six Catholic men—killed mercilessly in a revolutionary ambush—and their bodies still lay barely

fifteen minutes from there. I found myself in a blazing cemetery, under the Tropics... Well, that's a tale for another time and place.

Since my arrival, I had built quite a network of connections—starting with the Catholic world. To everyone, I was Doctor, let's say, Machín, and I discussed cancer so competently that, since no one there knew who I really was, I could invent the most outlandish theories—blaming it on anything from tapeworms to corns on the feet!

I was able to witness some incredibly colorful Christmas festivities, like the posadas. These are celebrated during the nine days leading up to Christmas. Each evening, people gather in the patio and recite a series of simple prayers, requesting permission from the homeowner to grant shelter to Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin.

Once permission is granted, a procession weaves through the courtyards and plazas—a mix of devotion and curiosity. Litanies are recited while (the women excluded) everyone else hungrily eyes the invaders' luxurious or practical belongings.

When the circuit is completed, the local wine is gulped down, the spicy food devoured, and then everyone heads back to the patio, where the piñata is waiting.

This is a kind of giant mascot, its clay belly stuffed with the most unbelievable trinkets—ranging from lighters and wallets to caricatures of police officers!

The goal is to break it open. Easier said than done: the piñata hangs from ropes that allow it to swing wildly in every direction, and to make things harder, the player is blindfolded. In reality, it turns into a blind, chaotic stick-fight against empty air. It only ends once the clay pot is smashed into a thousand pieces.

Then comes the stampede—children, plump women, and boisterous girls all diving for the spoils. After nine days of this sport, every clay pot in Mexico is shattered and every lady, thanks to these acrobatics, has rediscovered the slimness of lost springtime!

Amidst all this chaos and festivity, I met fascinating people and used the opportunity to speak with them.

But I still hadn't managed to enter the homes—and the private lives—of the revolutionaries. I would have to infiltrate them, all politeness and bows, hand-kissing and compliments... paying for it with the heads of my victims!



THE EXECUTIONERS AND THE VICTIMS

For me, the great sport was slipping into the salons where the wives and daughters of the revolutionary leaders celebrated. There, I managed to step on as few toes as possible and flatter the oafs with marvelous courtesies—or lean close to the ear of some old general, decked out like a prized workhorse, and sometimes to the ear of a little dove with an upturned nose, whispering as I stared at her: “You are adorable, your arms possess the sweetness of donkey’s milk, your figure is as supple as a leopard’s tail (do leopards have tails?).”

Compliments always work on women. They found me intelligent simply because I found them beautiful. And so, they invited me to luncheons and receptions where they would introduce me to their husbands or fathers. I even received, from a relative of the President of the Republic, a dedicated photograph—something that could have brought a prior or a university professor to tears!

You might say: That’s not very elegant. I agree. But I had to do it with those nameless beasts, responsible—in just two years—for the slaughter of twelve thousand Catholics who shared my faith and whose lives were as dear to me as my own. The wives and daughters of their executioners had that blood staining their towels and dripping from their diamond-covered fingers.

Yes, I deceived them. That’s true. But it was because I despised them. And the best form of contempt is to profit from those you detest. There was really no need for detours to take advantage of murderers not worth the rope with which, gladly, I would have hanged them...

I had to restrain myself—painfully so—to remain impassive in front of these animals. Staring at the beastly face of President Calles or wandering through the princely estates of Morones, I couldn’t help but remember the thousands of martyrs tortured to death—flayed alive, tied to the back of trucks and dragged, doused in gasoline and set ablaze, hanged along the roads, or left wounded and bleeding under the scorching sun and the biting mosquitoes...

That horrifying tragedy played before my eyes—the murdered young men, the women hanged like blackbirds from the trees in the state of Colima, or the telephone lines heavy with clusters of Catholics swaying ten meters high...

The entire epic of a martyred people was with me: thirty thousand

young men—peasants, workers, students—resisting, rifles in hand, the socialist persecutors after exhausting every legal means of resistance; four thousand young women ensured the supply of ammunition, risking unspeakable abuses followed by deportation to the Islas Marías, at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

These were the martyrs and heroes I saw whenever I spoke with Mexico's red tyrants.

They were stained by all these crimes. And stained, too, by their thefts, their looting, their orgies.

In this ruined country—where there wasn't even shelter for six hundred lepers, where three million people had fled to escape famine—the revolutionary leaders, who had come to power without a single peso, flaunted scandalous wealth.

Minister Morones' estate in Talpam had a castle, gardens, canals, a theater, stables filled with magnificent horses—not to mention the pools where, during weekend bacchanals, women recruited from suburban theaters bathed under the converging beams of multicolored spotlights.

President Calles' estate, where I went for Christmas, located between Mexico City and Puebla, was very likely the most beautiful in the country. A magnificent road, personally designed by Calles, connected it to the capital—and yes, it was the country that paid for it.

All these overlords owned vast estates. They had jewelry like aging courtesans. Luxury automobiles. Fat bank accounts. It seemed that this was what the revolution was really about. At least, that's how the red leaders of Mexico presented it to me...

Two years were enough—with the monstrous support of the United States—to behead Catholicism. At this moment, not a single Catholic school remains. Religious orders have been dissolved. Wearing religious attire is forbidden. Some “authorized” priests (in Mexico, one for every fifty thousand inhabitants) have been stripped of all political rights, treated like criminals, and registered with the police as if they were prostitutes.

It is death in silence. From time to time, a terse news report announces a church has been sacked or a few faithful murdered. That is all.

And so, it was an admirable epic, here in the heart of the 20th century, that gathered thirty thousand young men—mystical and rugged knights—all of them embracing deprivation, suffering, and death under

gunfire.

For years, fists clenched in silent rage, they had stood impassive against the worst abuses. The closure of schools, insults, beatings, bombs—none of it had broken them or driven them from the path of legality.

It took mass atrocities, unspeakable tortures, and persecution in all its bloody horror for, at the call of their bishops, a people to take up arms and run to defend their Faith. They were slaughtered like animals; to respond, they had no choice but the rifle.

I visited every Cristero battlefield in the company of these admirable young men, weathered by the blazing sun, hardened by suffering. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, through brush and desert, I traveled four thousand kilometers on a moving pilgrimage.

Following mountain trails, crossing endless sands where nothing but stunted trees grew and, here and there, the skeleton of a wild horse, I came to understand the heroism it took for the Cristeros to fight for thirty months—without bread, without weapons, without ambulances or medical services, without any support.

They lived off what the peasants gave them along the way and what the four thousand young Catholic women, organized as an auxiliary army, brought to their hideouts.

They camped out in the open, under the moonlight, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the center of the bivouac. At dawn, the priests gave communion to the soldiers kneeling, rifle in hand. Then, with the cross on their chest and the national flag adorned with Christ the King fluttering in the wind, they marched toward their destiny.

All this heroism was not in vain, for it saved the Catholic honor. And the thousands of little crosses marking Mexican soil, simply inscribed “Died for Christ the King”, are the most moving testimony to Christian greatness.

They tell us that our century was not entirely vile, selfish, and hedonistic, for amid such depravity, thousands of martyrs sacrificed themselves out of love for God...

THE BLEEDING BLOOM

The persecution and its thousands of martyrs had not been able to crush the faith of the people. It was an admirable sight: at dawn, before going to work, the laborers—wearing khaki or blue shirts, with their wide trousers held up by straps crossing their chests—filled the churches, knelt on the floor, and remained with their arms outstretched in the shape of a cross. The whole church became a strange gathering of calloused, dark hands... hands that had sometimes shrouded fallen Cristeros who died for God or had taken up the rifles of the "liberators."

Then they would leave. A huge sun shone over the road, gilding the oranges, the bananas, and the roses held out by the beggars. Everything was magnificent in the light: the bell towers adorned with multicolored tiles, the villages overflowing with flowers, the dark-skinned boys playing in the dust, the townsfolk carrying heaps of vegetables, the animals basking under the sun.

Yet these golden stones had been struck by rifle bullets; here, Father Pro had fallen after praying, on his knees, for his executioners full of cynicism; there, León Toral had been executed—I could still imagine him beside that sacred wall or in the vast prison, where I was able to enter thanks to a high-ranking official of the Revolution. We saw the cell where Toral had been savagely tortured for hours, hanging by his wrists; the small room where he had written his last letters; the place where he was brought back, riddled with bullets from the firing squad. I felt overwhelmed. At one end of the small vegetable garden, only a few meters wide, I immediately saw the wall where this young hero, a father of three, had fallen—murdered after a night of adoration to save his country—by order of the tyrant who had decreed the massacres, President Obregón. When I stood before that tragic wall, my blood rushed through my body. I couldn't contain myself and threw my hat to the ground. Tears welled up in my eyes. The officers and I walked to the prison gates without exchanging a single word. There, I hailed a taxi. I've never understood why they didn't arrest me on the spot.

I traveled through enchanting towns, past glaciers, along the Pacific, deep into the Chihuahua desert, near California. I was dazzled by the light, by the countless multicolored churches, by the charro spectacle of the indigenous people in their flamboyant costumes, tirelessly walking under heavy loads, while other solemn, indolent Indians rode on short-legged mules. The market displayed its gleaming fruits, its countless stalls, its

drinks, its carved wood, its tapestries, its clay pots. Some scribes were writing love letters in the main square for the illiterate. The bells—outside the steeples or beneath the giant trees—sent their heavy songs into the clear sky. One should have felt as light as the air, as joyful and strong as the sun casting its fire over everything, or as mighty as the trees, the red sands, and the glaciers... One should have... But then you entered the shacks and...

A very young mother showed us her children, whose father had been executed and whose body had disappeared. An old woman, completely devastated, dressed in deep mourning, carried some painful relics: pieces of cloth full of holes and soaked with dark blood, a muddy hat that had been trampled; the poor mother took a pair of scissors to offer me a few bloodstained shreds of those garments, all that remained of her two sons, slaughtered like animals in hatred of Christ, in the cemetery of Guadalajara.

Triumph of light, of flowers, of enormous trees, of the burning sands and the rushing streams, of the green and orange sunsets, of the fiery eyes in tanned, fierce faces—this is a land that Christ blesses, above all, by giving it, along with these splendors, the magnificent and bleeding bloom of its martyrs.



MEXICAN SUNDAYS

My Mexican Sundays are the sunniest, most passionate memories of my youth. During the week, I spoke with revolutionaries, Cristeros, and the families of martyrs. Even at impossible hours, I was taking notes, translating documents, overseeing demonstrations. But on Sundays, I set all my papers aside and, in the company of young Mexican men and women, set off to intoxicate myself with sun, flowers, warm lakes, and endless springtime...

A few kilometers from the capital, in Xochimilco, I found myself in a strange land, floating on water... islands populated with immense trees rising from the chinampas.

Mexico, at the time of the Spanish arrival in the 16th century, was truly an American Venice: canals crossed the city, and countless bridges spanned those waters plied by wooden boats. Today, Mexico has dried up. But Xochimilco, perched at 2,500 meters above sea level, has preserved the grand poetry of the islands...

Several canoes, fully decorated with roses and transformed into perfumed pavilions, awaited us. They glided forward in the shade of the flowers while the indigenous boatmen, with slow and steady strokes, carried us through the waterways... We passed from canal to canal, surrounded by strange trees whose fabulous, exotic names my companions whispered to me...

Some canoes, completely carpeted in carnations, drew ever closer. Then came the vendors, paddling up in a tiny canoe, breaking tortillas over a griddle and serving us meals right at the water's edge... Through the foliage, the sunlit sparkles of the sun-scorched glacial rocks suddenly appeared. We sang Mexican rounds to the piercing rhythm of the feverish guitars on the boat... The colors radiated unforgettable flames... The faces, necks, and arms of the girls gleamed with luminous whiteness...

We returned at sunset, intoxicated by the perfumes, by youth, by baskets of oranges, and bundles of flowers in our hands... Not a word was spoken as we admired the beauty of twilight... Then, fervent and tender, a voice rose, and all of us in the car joined in the stirring, rough, and glorious song, in perfect harmony with the beat of our hearts...

The land had changed. I found myself by the Pacific Ocean. Along dirt roads, we reached Lake Chapala, whose waters stretch for sixty kilometers in shades of blue and mauve between gently sloping hills, so

clear that even the tiniest details are visible.

Memories of the persecution were ever-present: ruins of houses everywhere and, out in the middle of the lake, the island where the Cristeros had taken their last stand.

We sped toward it in a motorized canoe, skimming the waves in a trail of foam. It was January 1st. The water was as warm as August on our European shores. Suddenly, I dove into the water mid-ride. I swam, delirious with joy, stunned by the water's warmth; then I climbed back into the canoe, breathless from fatigue and happiness... January 1st... In my homeland, this is a day for snowball fights or throat gargling against sore throats. But before my eyes, the lake, at the peak of noon, sprawled magnificently and burning under the sun.

Other Sundays were less peaceful: we went to the bullfights.

With a European sensibility, these slaughterhouses of bulls horrified me. I couldn't understand how tens of thousands of people could be so passionate about such feats. I went, for the first time, full of guilt, flanked by exuberant, boisterous friends, pulsing like drums.

At the entrance of the immense arena, everyone was thoroughly searched. Yes—because the frenzy during the fight is so intense that Mexicans throw anything within reach into the ring! Sometimes even a bottle or a grapefruit! That's why, before allowing entry, an inspector pats down the chests of those eager spectators.

The show is costly, almost worthless: nearly a hundred francs just to roast under the blazing sun. The best seats are opposite, in the shade. They're packed with young ladies who refuse to ruin their complexions or squint in the light. Forgetting their oppressors and tyrants, all of Mexico, by three in the afternoon, is seated on cement steps, their eyes shielded by large cardboard visors. These people starve themselves just to spend their pesos in honor of the matadors!

And after witnessing the spectacle, I understood. Certainly, there are disemboweled horses and furious bulls, with banderillas stuck in their necks, collapsing bleeding onto the sand. But above all, there are men risking their lives before these enraged beasts. These men possess incredible poise and grace. A simple movement, and their red cape defeats the animal, which charges just centimeters from their chest. It is astonishing. Twenty times you think they'll be gored. Twenty times, with bravery and skill, they escape the monster. The crowd's passion is aimed

at this life on the line, at this human power taming brute force with precision and mastery. A good performance—and within two minutes, you are one with that man, because that man is you, is me. And a triumphant roar breaks out when the bull buckles its front legs, heart pierced, completely dead...

The whole event is preceded by thunderous entrances, with grand frills, floats, and trumpets. Humorous moments unfold: the bull is too small, the crowd boos, shouting “Go home to your mother,” and the mother—taking the form of a herd of cows with bells—comes to fetch her calf and escort him, completely humiliated, back to the pasture! Then there are the frantic, comical escapes over the barriers by the squad of picadores, whose role is to provoke the bull but who usually end up dashing away at full speed, horns grazing their backsides!

But the gravest moment is the bullfighter’s failure. No one laughs then. The audience expects a proper fight. It is a whole art. Sometimes the blow fails. The sword slips. Or, poorly positioned, the bull strikes, sending the matador flying through the air like a matchstick. The crowd stomps, hurling whatever they can grab—newspapers, oranges, caps... But if the strike is true, then comes the victory. Delirium erupts. Everyone rises, shouts, and gestures wildly. If the triumph is perfect, without hesitation, thirty thousand handkerchiefs wave in the air, demanding the ear of the dead bull for the victorious matador. The matador cuts it off and, ear in hand, takes a victory lap around the ring in a whirlwind of straw hats, visors, and sombreros flying in all directions.

I went back five times: invariably, the matadors gestured with their red capes, defying death, fleeing in haste; the picadores, mounted on old blindfolded nags, took the bull’s attacks while lashing at him—until the moment when the matador de toros intervenes, prodigious, dazzling, imperial.

After two hours of the fight, everyone rushes out of the arena to gather around the victors, still dressed in their *traje de luces*, parading in luxurious limousines... Meanwhile, trucks haul the bulls, already butchered, to the slaughterhouses—where tomorrow, they’ll be served as steaks or stew on Mexico’s tables!



FAREWELL, MÉXICO...

It's time to close my cardboard suitcase. It's decided... because I have a mother who, for the past three months, has lived in constant anxiety in her small European country, where I left her to go off on this adventure.

One good thing about me is that I'm an incorrigible wanderer who always ends up retracing his steps... She knows I could be in jail, a prisoner, held by fanatics... She worries a hundred thousand times more than I do. Don't worry, Mother, I'm going to wash the collars of my shirts and my handkerchiefs—and I'll come back...

Besides, I've gathered all the information I needed. The Catholics have explained the horrifying tragedy to me and given me the key to the conflict. I've seen the countless graves, the parents of the martyrs, and the battlefields. I've witnessed the agony of Catholicism—its annihilation, its last dying gasps...

I lived among the revolutionaries, studied their agrarian and social collapse, visited their schools, their prisons, attended their orgies, their parades, watched the spread of their tyranny... In a large suitcase, I'm carrying seventy-two kilos of documentation. Now, I'm ready to return...

How to get back? When I arrived, my wallet was empty. And you can't fly back home on thin air! But somehow, luck always seems to be on my side. One evening, in one of the lounges, I struck up a conversation with the editor of an American magazine. We ended up like old friends. I told him about my little travels. He was amused by the story. We met again the next day. He read the first part of my manuscript. "All right!" And he offered me five hundred dollars—eighteen thousand francs—for the translation of my pages. I jumped up to the ceiling lamp! I'd never felt so rich! Life is beautiful! I'm heading to the United States...

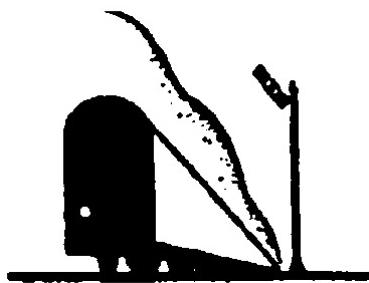
There, the same lucky streak continued. My visit was announced. I met with a high-ranking official who arranged a launch in Spanish. I became a millionaire for the second time! Like a king of lard or chewing gum, I embarked on a princely tour through the United States and even went up to Canada. I forgot to save a penny!

Meanwhile, I was saying goodbye to my Mexican friends... I was as emotional as a small child... We spent the last nights dreaming, watching the sunsets of heartbreaking colors, breathing in the warm scents of wilting flowers... Wild songs played again on some records...

Last Sunday: The Catholics organized a secret gathering without telling me. They brought me by car and suddenly, I found myself in front of a crowd of men and women. They offered me plates of fired clay and painted wood, indigenous tapestries where the brilliant colors of fruit and sky were scattered. I spoke, my whole being on fire; these barefooted Indians, who understood only my expression, had thick tears, like diamonds, rolling down their rough, dark cheeks... A race of heroes and martyrs...

The morning of departure... Close friends were on the platform, discreetly. We embraced in the local custom with hearty pats on the back. I had lived through an immense tragedy; I had tied my youth to this superhuman greatness, to this blood, to this Faith... The train started moving... Our hands clung to each other, then separated; I leaned my whole body out the window and shouted one last time the cry of the twelve thousand victims, of an entire people crushed by the most relentless persecution:

"¡Viva Cristo Rey...!"



THE DESERT, OH CHIHUAHUA

Here I am, after several days on a Pullman train that will take me to the American border after traveling two thousand kilometers. I settle in. I ask the waiter for a bottle of Monterrey beer and, now recovered from the emotions, I gaze out at the country. I freshen up. I feel a sting in my heart as I look, for the last time, at the dark-skinned Indians and their magnificent women with their orange or green skirts... At each stop, I buy lace, ponchos, little clay pots, grapefruits.

I let myself be carried away by the vast distances. I'm so happy! I caress the children. I smile at the young women. And always, I board at the last moment when the Pullman starts moving again, crowded with clusters of indigenous people who run along the footboard for fifty meters before leaping onto the ballast at full speed.

We travel along streams where mischievous little boys splash about, completely naked, beside their mothers busy doing the laundry. Beautiful churches round off their radiant domes under the tropical sun, surrounded by gigantic trees where weathered bronze bells hang in the open air.

At sunset, beneath a pale green sky, we stop in Querétaro. It was here that Emperor Maximilian fell under the bullets. A tragically sweet evening settles over the countryside. A few red rays streak the horizon. An old leper picks up a banana peel. A woman, to whom I give ten cents, mutters a Hail Mary... That is all that remains on this land, which sank into the blood of one of the greatest dreams of our era.

Night pulls us along, stretched out on our bunks. I lift the curtains. I watch, under the moon, landscapes that grow ever more desolate. Morning comes, wrapped in mist; a few colts gallop by; the cacti raise their spiny arms to the sun. The desert is approaching. The sand already begins to creep into the cars, a white, dry sand that stings the eyes, despite the double windows.

At midday, a stop in Torreón, a village lost in what feels like the Mexican Sahara. A final farewell—and onward. Not a single blade of grass, not a single sprout. Only a few scorched, blackened shrubs line the white ridges.

I stare into the distance at the mountain ranges. Then, suddenly, my eyes fall upon the skeleton of a wild horse, stripped of its flesh by the torrid wind, folded at the knees like a museum piece. Not a soul for miles.

Then, a small hut built from railroad ties, a well, a few red or gray pigs, a family of ragged, filthy Indians...

The train stops. The soldiers descend into the sand, the women open their bags... they eat together by a fire made of splinters. Then, like the great thunder of rifles, the train lurches forward again... Hundreds of kilometers stretch on endlessly... Nothing. Always sand.

Gone are the days when groups armed under Christ's banner or revolutionary patrols on horseback guarded the railroad against the attacks of liberators... The Cristeros fell in the vast desert, their arms in the shape of a cross, faces turned toward the sky; the gusting winds have worn them down, and they sleep, lost beneath the sand, waiting for the sacred awakening of God's trumpets.

We have been traveling for fifty hours... The desert recedes, dissolves into bare mountains. At dawn, to my great astonishment, I see, for the first time in weeks, a column of smoke rising from an Indian hut... And yes, we are approaching the north, and it is January. I had forgotten that I was entering a land where it can get cold!

The little Native children huddle in their ponchos. The golden adventure is over. I ascend toward snow, toward ice; the coats are otter fur instead of light, multicolored fabrics. I feel a total abandonment within me. I dream as the hills stretch out before me... I see nothing else.

The train comes to a stop. Beside us, the same sordid, dusty shacks still stand. But a Customs officer suddenly shakes me from my lethargy. I get off. A few hundred meters away, the Rio Grande carves its way through a dry canyon, and then, like an arrogant vanguard, a row of enormous buildings rises up into the sky:

I am face-to-face with the United States.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE

It was a good idea to enter the Mexican Post Office before crossing the bridge that separates the two countries. They searched me all over like a colt at the fair. It was necessary for the police to check if I was hiding the corpse of the President of the Republic or the Ministry of Finance's safe between my ribs! After that, they checked the hems of my clothes, the bottom of my suitcase, and the soles of my shoes. Clearly, there was nothing—absolutely nothing—simply because, at that very moment, my suitcase, containing seventy-two kilos of documents, hundreds of photographs, a Cristero flag, and the text of my investigation, was casually passing under the police's noses, a kilometer away!

Once they had counted my ribs, with my hems undone and my shoes loose, the police had no choice but to let me say goodbye. But here I am, as proud as Artaban, crossing the bridge over the Rio Grande. Twenty meters more, and I'll be in the United States. Ten more meters. Five now. First customs officer: I present my fake Belgian passports. He opens his eyes wide and exclaims cheerfully, "O God, gjij spreekt Vlaamsch!"

The first American I meet is a Fleming! Born on the Haute street fifty years ago! He's lived in the United States for a quarter of a century! We both started bellowing immensely. I tell him sincerely that I was very afraid of having difficulties at the American Immigration Office! Linking arms, Flanders and Wallonia descended into the Immigration Office!

There, I immediately realize this is going to go wrong. They think I'm a "stowaway"! I show them my train and ship tickets to Le Havre, but it's no use. To them, I'm an emigrant trying to sneak in via Mexico. I swear to all the gods, in French, Flemish, English, and Spanish, that I have no intention of making preserves or Ford cars in their country, while they move me from one office to another, telling me everywhere that I will be denied entry. What a mess! I had spent all my money on my return tickets. I couldn't even afford to travel by the other route, through the Antilles. And here I find myself stuck at the end of the world! I immediately realize that I won't get anything from these idiots. Going back, I return to Mexican territory and send a telegram to a Californian bishop.

I was constantly harassed by hustlers and swindlers. They offered to help me cross the river secretly at night. But I distrusted the informers. I resisted. Three days later, the bishop had managed to mobilize a group of big shots from the United States. The sheriff himself came to fetch me in Juarez. I passed by the Mexican customs officers with my head held high.

On the other side of the bridge, where they made deep bows, I breathed a sigh of relief. Red Mexico was now just a memory. I was saved.



PHOTO GALLERY



Degrelle's falsified documentation which he used to get into Mexico



Leon Degrelle in 1928



Young Cristeros, in the city of Morelia, Mexico.



The Mexican press publishes on its front page the "Decree of Suspension of Worship," which formalized religious persecution.



Members of the National Republican Party praying.



The Cristero Banner



*Three generations
of Cristeros*



Various Cristero propaganda prints depicting the terrible repression of Mexican Catholic priests by the federal army.



Cristeros beheaded by General Vargas' soldiers.



Francisco Ruiz and companions hanged in Sahuayo.



Exhibition of the corpse of a Cristero.



Priest Agustín Pro Juárez praying moments before being shot.



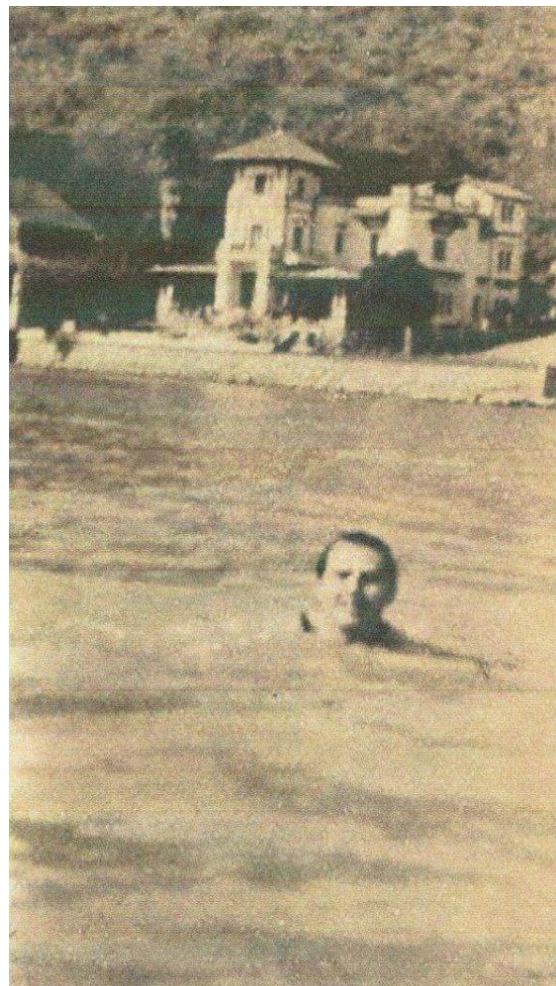
On the way to Mexico



*On the Rio Panuco boat,
which would take him to
Mexico.*



Visiting the United States



Swimming in Lake Chapala

La

Persécution Mexicaine

A ce moment où la persécution mexicaine reprend sous des formes moins brutales, plus sournoises, mais aussi haineuses que jadis, il n'est pas vain de nous rappeler les atrocités sans nom et les quinze mille martyrs qui en jalonnèrent les débuts.

La mort d'un saint n'est pas un fait divers : qu'un journal rapporte aujourd'hui pour la curiosité de ses lecteurs et qu'on peut oublier le lendemain. C'est de l'histoire, de l'histoire religieuse, de l'histoire éternelle, que les Chrétiens doivent relire sans cesse, où ils doivent chercher leurs modèles et puiser leur force.

A Jusqu'au Sang et à Sous l'ombre d'Obregon, ces deux évangiles de la tragédie mexicaine, qui devraient se trouver dans toutes les familles chrétiennes, nous empruntons les quelques traits ci-après :

« Le 30 janvier 1928, le monument national au Christ-Roi vole en éclat. C'est un symbole.

LE SANG DES PRÉTRES.

Le 14 août 1926 Don Batis, Curé à Chalchihuites, dont le seul crime est un apostolat doux et charitable dans sa paroisse est arrêté. Le lendemain, fête de la Vierge, il tombe criblé de balles, en même temps que trois de ses ouailles.

En mars de la même année, un curé du territoire de Nayarit est fusillé dans son église, alors qu'il consomme l'Hostie. Neuf paroissiens qui se sont soulevés sont pendus à un arbre de Valisquillo.

L'abbé Correa Mateo, âgé de 62 ans, est rencontré, la nuit, par des soldats alors qu'il porte les Saintes Espèces à un mourant. On le roue de coups, parce qu'il refuse de livrer son Dieu ; on l'incarcère ; on lui fait confesser des prisonniers ; puis on l'exécute parce qu'il ne veut pas révéler ce qu'ils lui ont confié.

Après avoir torturé pendant 3 jours et 3 nuits, le P. Sabas Reyes, vicaire de Totollan, sur la place même de son village, la soldatesque imbibe ses pieds de gazoline, y met le feu, puis le traîne au cimetière où il meurt.

Abbé José Sanchez : pendu à Palmitas.

Abbé Robles : pendu près de la montagne de Quila.

Abbé Sedano : « J'ai l'honneur de vous communiquer que je viens d'arrêter le curé Sedano et que je l'ai passé par les armes avec cinq autres fanatiques. Les cadavres sont exposés à la gare de Ciudad Guzman.

Pour information, respectueusement,
*Le général de Division,
Chef des opérations militaires,
J.-M. Ferreira. »*

Abbé Vera : fusillé revêtu des ornements liturgiques, après l'avoir appréhendé pendant le Saint Sacrifice.

Don Magallanes et don Caloca assassinés en 1927 (meurtre confirmé par lettre pastorale de Mgr l'archevêque de Gua Valajara).

Le F. Junipero (70 ans) devant le tribunal du général Fox.

« Combien avez-vous dit de messes ?

« — Monsieur, j'en ai dit autant que j'ai pu. »

Tué comme un chien, puis jeté dans un fossé.

LE SANG DES LAIQUES.

Joaquim Silva, Manuel Melgarejo, Alondo Acuna Rodriguez, José Garcia Farfan, Florentino Alvarez, Manuel Campos morts pour le Christ-Roi...

Joaquin Silva y Carrasco, l'une des plus belles figures des victimes mexicaines. Sa vie, avant la persécution est celle de tant de nos fervents propagandistes ; le danger fait de lui un héros ; la mort, un martyr. Avant de le fusiller on veut lui enlever son chapelet : « Jamais, tant que je « serai en vie ! »

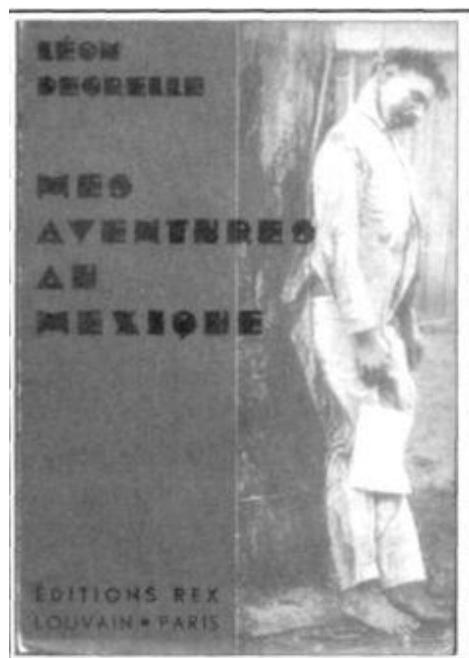
A un passant qui lui demande s'il va à l'échafaud : « Non, au Calvaire ». En 1928 ce fut le couronnement. Après les membres on frappa la tête : le monument national au Christ-Roi vole en éclat. Mais si les cadavres se corrompent, si les symboles s'écroulent, sur la grande leçon qui s'en dégage, les persécuteurs n'auront jamais de prise.

Et cette flamme qui a embrasé le Mexique ne peut pas s'éteindre, pas même en Belgique. Notre devoir est de la raviver, pour qu'elle nous habpe à notre tour, pour qu'elle dévore le monde.

AMAND GÉRADIN.



Saying goodbye to his mother before leaving



The first edition of "My Adventures in Mexico" published in Belgium

Cover of issue 2 of the publication «REX», which included a report on the situation of Catholics in Mexico.